

# APPENDIX I

## I-PLAN

for

GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

# GOVERNMENTAL UNITS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governmental Units is one component of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) framework. It includes boundary lines which change very little, such as Idaho's borders with Canada and with adjoining states; boundary lines which change frequently, such as city limits; and boundary lines which may move as other data changes, such as county lines that follow rivers. While much of this data already exists in some digital form, its quality has not been fully investigated. At this time, only crude mechanisms exist for keeping it current. The goal of this plan is to inventory Idaho data for governmental unit boundaries, assess the accuracy and currency of the data, determine user needs, and establish methods for meeting those needs.

## **2. DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Theme Description**

Idaho geographic features for governmental units are the nation (our boundary with Canada); the state (boundaries with Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington); the 44 counties; some 199 incorporated cities; and 6 American Indian Reservations and Trustlands. Each should be identified by name and the applicable Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) code. In addition, the boundaries of the features should include information about other features (such as roads, railroads, or streams) with which the boundaries are associated and the description of the association (such as coincidence, offset, or corridor).

### **2.2 Vision Statement**

The Governmental Units thematic layer is relatively current, complete, accurate to the applicable scale, available on line, and accessible to anyone who wants it.

### **2.3 Interdependencies**

Many governmental unit boundaries are built on hydrographic, topographic, and cadastral boundaries. Specific interdependencies must be established and documented so that changes in other features (for example, PLSS data from the GCDB) are synchronized with changes in governmental unit boundaries. In addition, the STC is in large part dependent on the quality of the 44 counties' parcel mapping capabilities: counties with good control networks and accurate, current, digital parcel data end up with better-quality boundary information.

## **3. BENEFITS AND RISKS**

### **3.1 Benefits and Driving Issues**

The boundaries of municipalities are subject to change; federal and state funds and law enforcement may be affected by these changes, so data sets should be kept relatively current. Other governmental unit boundaries rarely change.

### **3.2 Risk Analysis**

This framework theme has been completed by the Idaho State Tax Commission (STC). However, scales and accuracies within the dataset vary greatly. A user who is accustomed to highly accurate information from some larger counties should be aware that other area data may not be of the same quality. In addition, the current schedule of annual updates might be insufficient because cities may change boundaries midyear, and those changes would not be reflected until, perhaps, months later.

## **4. INVENTORY**

### **4.1 Stakeholders**

The primary Stakeholder for Governmental Units. Other major Stakeholders are: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Idaho Departments of Lands (IDL), Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), and Idaho State Parks and Recreation (ISPR); public utilities; and local government taxing districts.

### **4.2 Data Sources**

To help the STC in its effort, Idaho Code 63-215 mandates that all taxing districts report boundary changes to the STC within 30 days of any boundary-changing action. This data is available on INSIDE Idaho as shapefiles or as Environmental Systems Research Institute's (ESRI) export format (.e00) with regions topology that allows selective querying of district types. For example, "region.ci" shows all cities; and "region.fi" shows fire districts. The data is released to counties every January or February. Most counties perform some quality control checks; changes are integrated into the data by March each year.

### **4.3 Current Status**

The STC has created a digital dataset of all Idaho taxing districts, assembled by tax code areas. While this effort is commendable, much work remains to improve the spatial accuracy of this data to a uniform standard. Data available on the INSIDE Idaho website is updated annually.

### **4.4 Business Needs**

As indicated above, the primary Stakeholder is the STC. Idaho Code Sections 63-405 and 63-410 require it to provide counties with values of operating property broken down by taxing districts. Thus, the STC must maintain maps of all taxing entities, including cities, highway districts, cemetery districts, school districts, etc. The Census Bureau tracks city limits. The BLM and USFS distribute funds based on county boundaries. State government agencies may distribute sales tax and highway maintenance revenues based on current boundaries. Public utilities need accurate taxing district information to allocate the value of operating properties. In addition, public safety officials (fire and police) need to know where various city (and other) limits are in case they are called on to respond to disasters outside their primary service areas.

### **4.5 Challenges**

The logical Author and Steward of this data, STC, is currently understaffed and underfunded and is unable to undertake additional responsibilities at this time. National

standards are being developed, and the adoption of these standards could trigger additional work by STC.

Another type of challenge exists by virtue of STC's regulatory role. A city or other taxing district might pass an annexation ordinance with a flaw—typically a legal description that does not close or has uncertainty. Although the city would provide fire, police, and other services in that area, the STC would not update its maps until it received a corrected description. This could lead to misunderstanding among users who rely on STC-produced data.

## **5. STANDARDS**

### **5.1 Standards**

Three standards are relevant. First is the Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Governmental Unit Boundary Data Content Standard. Release is planned within 12 months. Second is ESRI's ArcGIS Administrative Boundaries Data Model. It is based on Census Bureau's tracts and blocks, which is not necessarily a Governmental Units Framework layer. However, this data model must be considered. Third is the present STC practice, which arranges all taxing districts into Tax Code Areas which it can reassemble by regions to show cities, school districts, cemetery districts, etc. This standard works for them; however, they might be persuaded to change it or to provide subset themes of individual taxing district types.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **6.1 Implementation Approach**

At this time, most components of the theme exist. The key is to determine user needs for more accurate or timely data or for additional features. An inventory will be developed to identify the many existing data sets. Finally we plan to implement needed institutional arrangements for data creation and maintenance. In all phases, STC is critical.

### **6.2 Implementation Team**

At this time, STC is the Author of most of this data. They have a longstanding relationship with INSIDE Idaho and a statutory requirement to keep data current (on an annual basis).

### **6.3 Data Development**

The STC data is based on the Geographic Coordinate Database's (GCDB) PLSS framework or on better data where available. Data exists at varying levels of accuracy: from 1:2,400 scale in more populous cities and counties to 1:24,000 scale GCDB-derived data in rural counties to 1:500,000 scale of the least accurate parts of the STC's statewide dataset. Where accuracies are inadequate, more accurate data will need to be developed.

Some improvement in data quality will occur over time as counties improve their parcel data.

Conversion and enhancement to geodatabase structure is anticipated.

#### **6.4 Data Maintenance**

The STC has all needed data and a standard of processing most district-changing annexations and ordinances within 30 days.

## **6.5 Data Distribution**

The STC has a longstanding relationship with INSIDE Idaho, which currently offers all Tax Code Area maps on line in several formats: .pdf, shapefile, .e00, and .dxf. Semi-annual or quarterly updates may be warranted.

## **6.6 Implementation Schedule**

None indicated at this time.

## **6.7 Cost Estimates**

It could cost \$30,000 to bring state and county boundaries to 1:24,000 scale with ties to the GCDB. Completion of a geodatabase showing all underlying dependences (on PLSS, on rivers and creeks, and on ridges and divides) could cost an additional \$30,000. Costs depend on whether the structure is custom or an off-the-shelf data model. Costs also depend on progress made in PLSS, hydrography, and other data sets.

# **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **7.1 Recommendations for Institutional and Financial Initiatives**

It is critical to work closely with STC. If necessary, use ITRMC clout to persuade STC to provide current subsets of key data, such as city limits, on INSIDE Idaho more frequently than once per year.

## **7.2 Recommendations for Data Stewardship and Integration**

The Steward and Integrator is Idaho State Tax Commission.

## **7.3 Recommendations for Legislative Initiatives**

No statutory changes are needed.

## **7.4 Recommendations for Policy, Rule and Procedural Changes**

None necessary other than to having STC publish current city limits on a semi-annual or quarterly basis.

# **8. PLAN UPDATE CYCLE**

Review the plan every two years.